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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 30 June 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Please find attached a letter from Ms. Tzipi Livni, Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, regarding the recent developments in our region (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the enclosed letter and its annex circulated to all permanent missions as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 108 and 14.

(*Signed*) Daniel **Carmon**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 30 June 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I thought it appropriate to share with you some information about recent developments in our region.

Last Sunday, the Hamas terrorist organization, which constitutes the Palestinian Authority government, infiltrated into Israel from the Gaza Strip. In the ensuing attack, clearly weeks in the planning, the terrorists killed two Israeli soldiers, and abducted Corporal Gilad Shalit, aged 19, who is believed to be alive and held by his captors in Gaza.

On the same day, an additional Israeli citizen, Eliyahu Asheri, aged 18, was also kidnapped by Palestinian terrorists. His body was discovered late last night by Israeli forces who determined that he had been murdered on the day of his abduction.

These Palestinian attacks were launched after long weeks of Israeli restraint in the face of numerous attempted kidnappings and unceasing Kassam rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip that have targeted civilians, schools and homes, traumatized children and paralysed the Israeli city of Sderot.

As you will recall, Israel fully withdrew from the Gaza Strip last summer in order to create an opportunity to re-energize the peace process. In return, it has received a daily barrage of terrorist attacks from Gaza and a Palestinian Authority controlled by the Hamas terrorist organization that continues to be actively involved in terrorism, while fundamentally rejecting Israel's very right to exist.

From the moment initial reports of the kidnappings were received, Israel has spared no effort in exhausting all diplomatic channels at its disposal and, in particular, has given Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, every opportunity to secure the safe release of Gilad Shalit.

But while Israel has given full priority to diplomatic efforts, it cannot tolerate a situation where its citizens are being held hostage by members of Hamas. As every hour passes, the threat to the life and well-being of Gilad Shalit intensifies, and the urgency of action to end this crisis grows.

In light of the absence of progress through diplomatic channels, IDF forces have begun to operate in the Gaza Strip. Israel did not leave the Gaza Strip in order to return to it. The military operation is specific in nature and limited in scope. Its purpose is neither punishment nor retaliation, and every effort will be made to minimize harm to Palestinian civilians. It seeks only to fulfil Israel's legitimate need and responsibility to bring Gilad safely home and prevent the continuation of terrorist attacks from Gaza against Israel and its citizens.

Israel has also decided, as part of its fight against Palestinian terrorism, to intensify its efforts to arrest terrorist operatives and members of Palestinian terrorist organizations and prosecute before the relevant courts.

The grave attacks which have necessitated Israel's response have taken place with the full involvement and blessing of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. They only confirm the importance of the policy adopted by the international community following the recent Palestinian elections, and the three core conditions it has

stipulated that any Palestinian government must fulfil to be considered a legitimate political partner.

It is critical, in this context, that the international community continue to strictly adhere to its policy and not be led astray by vague Palestinian formulations adopted for political convenience that blatantly fail — even at an elementary level — to demonstrate any commitment to any of these three conditions.

The Palestinian Authority is led by a terrorist government that remains committed to a radical and militant Islamic ideology, continues — even at this very moment — to engage in terrorism and reject the basic tenets of the peace process. Any such government must be treated accordingly — not be rewarded or appeased. Our common commitment to fighting terrorism and strengthening those genuinely committed to peace demands no less.

I urge you to continue to exert all possible pressure on the Palestinian Authority and on the Hamas terrorist organization, including its members and sponsors in Damascus, so as to ensure the immediate and safe release of the abducted Israeli citizen and to finally bring an end to the use of Palestinian territory as a base for terrorist operations.

(*Signed*) Tzipi **Livni**
Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs